

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, May 21, 1902, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO HABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. May 21, 1902. My darling Mabel:

I am in despair about letter writing. I am overwhelmed with things that must be done with no one to help me — and all the time I want to give all my attention to laboratory work.

Mr. Booth's statistics for the June Review, sheep statistics, census tables, all pulling different ways — and demanding immediate attention — let alone the N. E. A! — but I am here for the laboratory work mainly — so I don't neglect that — and take the others up evening and night but cannot make much progress. Then on the top of all — letters — most of the letters I fear will never be answered. I cannot manage to write to President Elliott about census schedules — or to that splendid go-ahead fellow, Mr. Dunn — or any of the others. Letters must just wait for Miss Safford and by the time she comes they will no longer admit of answer — and I will be in ever so many people's black books — but it simply can't be helped. Something has to go — and now that I have the chance — I will hold on to the laboratory experiments — and let everything else slide. Trying to keep a photographic record of experiments. I sent you a batch of pictures. They should be made up into a bundle and deposited in Volta Bureau among my things. Cannot describe progress now. Very little written yet that any one could make head or tail of. Diagrams, calculations, discussions occupy note-books. I am making the rule of thinking on my feet in the open air as much as possible — Result: Several hours a day in 2 open air — and a lot of gentle exercise. I have made no change in diet and etc., and my weight now begins to come down — but slowly, however. I feel quite well, however, and am satisfied. Only thing troubling me is the N.E.A. meeting in Minneapolis in July. I must attend — as a matter of duty — and yet I feel I shall be taking my life in my hands to go there then.

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News of Susie's Engagement to Mr. Frost — and now Mr. Arthur ?. McCurdy's Engagement to Miss Mace. All are to be congratulated. We were evidently right in supposing Mr. McCurdy to be in a marrying frame of mind — though wrong in supposing his attentions were wandering from Georgetown. There again — black books. I should write to Mr. McCurdy, Miss Mace and Susie — but simply CANNOT . It takes me too long to write a nice letter — and no letter at all is perhaps better than poor congratulations — a sort of “damning with faint praise” would never do — Oh! dear — I wish you were here. Emptiness and desolation all about me. The House-boat is better than the empty Hall — sunshine and fresh air — and spring fairly here — all waiting for you.

Your loving husband, Alec.